

The Real and the Imaginary: Selected Filipino Literature from the Philippine Revolution to the Marcos Era

An Honors Thesis (HONR 499)

by

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Abstract

Historical literature is valuable to understanding the past as authors are allowed to distort history to heighten certain themes of change and continuity while also expressing the complexities of historical events. This is especially true for the Philippines, as Dr. José Rizal's *Noli Me Tángere* and *El Filibusterismo* began the Filipino Nationalist movement. That tradition of literature is continual celebrated by Filipinos today. The following analysis tracks themes throughout several novels written about Philippine history. In *Noli Me Tángere*, *El Filibusterismo*, *The Three-Cornered Sun*, *My Sad Republic*, *Great Philippine Energy Jungle Café*, and the *Rosales Saga*, Philippine historical literature highlights the inequities caused by the Philippines' colonial legacy and how individuals strive to counter and fight against those historical limits. I analyze these twelve novels to analyze the three key divisions in Philippine history — those of religion, location, and national identity.

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Process Analysis Statement

The process for this research paper was a grueling one. Throughout a two year time span, Dr. Hall and I selected various novels that we thought were vital to understanding Philippine History. As such, each of these twelve novels and others that could not fit well into the themes and narratives discussed in this paper were analyzed at an individual level for theme and message. As a result, I continually added to my knowledge regarding the Philippine Revolution and other events like the Presidency of Ferdinand Marcos and the subsuming People's Power Revolution. The greatest difficulty came after these individual analyses. Across all twelve novels I tracked specific themes and connections that meaningfully addressed Philippine history. From this I arrived at the three key divisions — religion, location, and national identity, which I used to understand the complexities of each of these novels in creating a more rich understanding of the Philippines.

I learned a lot throughout this process. While ethnically Filipino, I am nationally an American. Due to this, I knew almost nothing about the Philippines and its rich and diverse history. Throughout I was able to understand how certain colonial systems affected the Philippines, the internal conflicts that plagued the early republic, and how these same difficulties persist one way or another in the modern day. While there is still much about the Philippines to understand and learn, this process has provided me the foundation to better understand the nuances and difficulties of the Philippines.

For me personally, this project has engendered and fostered a sense of love for historical literature and a love for my family's home country. As a result I have sought more opportunities to learn about the Philippines and the relating areas. Recently I have begun researching the history of other nations such as Malaysia, Indonesia, and Taiwan. This has included finding historical literature within these nations. This project has provided me a foundation for further growth and understanding, which I hope will be a lifelong thirst for understanding the nations of Southeast Asia.

The movie *General Luna* began with this statement — “While historical accuracy is important, there are bigger truths about the Filipino that can only be reached by combining the *real* and the *imaginary*.”¹ In this sense, to reach a deeper understanding of Filipino history one must study both historiographical sources and historical literature. As a whole, historical literature provides valuable insights into the perceptions of people in their time. Specifically, authors are permitted to warp history and to distort time, highlighting central themes and focusing on prominent historical issues. For the Philippines specifically, its historical literary tradition centralizes on the centrifugal and centripetal forces of Filipino nationalism.

The foundation for literary discussions regarding Filipino nationalism and literature begins with Dr. José Rizal, a young *Mestizo* born in the province of Laguna. As an urban elite, Rizal pursued a Western education by studying abroad in Europe, where he began to embody the beliefs of the European Enlightenment and became an *Ilustrado*, an educated Filipino elite. During this trip, Rizal authored *Noli Me Tángere* and *El Filibusterismo*. Written in 1887 and 1891 respectively, these two seminal novels ignited the revolutionary fervor within the Philippines and formed the foundation for the revolutionary literary tradition. Both novels examine the major tension within the revolutionary movement, that of unity and division. Centrally these two novels focus on the actions of Juan Crisóstomo Marsalis Ibarra, a self-inserted character who mirrors Rizal’s personal background. Both men were of the *Mestizo* social class from Laguna and were enabled to earn a European education abroad. Both of them returned from their studies to find the Philippines rife with inequality and dominated by the strong influence of the Spanish Catholic Church. In writing these novels, Rizal forged the collective Filipino identity and sparked the Filipino nationalist movement. Rizal’s work would inspire numerous groups throughout the islands to participate in the Philippine Revolution —

from the urban elite and rural landholding *hacenderos* to the *Indios*, the poor indigenous people of the Philippines.

Rizal's novels are set in his home province of Laguna in the fictional town of San Diego. Throughout the novel Rizal utilizes San Diego as an example of semi-urban coastal life within the Philippines, allowing representations for both rural and urban Filipinos. Within Rizal's depiction of the Philippines, the Spanish Catholic Church's role in Filipino society was complex. While the Church served as a foundation for a shared sense of identity, as all members of the community from the richest *Mestizo* landholders to the poorest *Indios* were members of the congregation, the Spanish priesthood also manipulated the societal congregation to accomplish selfish goals. To retain societal control of the Philippines, the fathers loomed the threat of purgatory over the heads of the faithful, pressuring them to be devout and maintain the expectations of the Church fathers. This threat, compounded by the ostentatious displays of wealth and mysterious rites of the Catholic Church, led to an increase in the persuasive power of the Church as it empowered itself and held primary sovereignty over the civil power of the *Mestizo* and Spanish legacy municipal and local governments. Utilizing these methods the Catholic Church became a de facto center of authority, which gave the Spanish fathers the autonomy to pursue their own whims as displayed by Rizal in *Noli Me Tángere* through the powerful priests of San Diego, Father Sibyla and Father Dámaso. Rizal claims that the seat of true power in the Spanish colonial Philippines does not rest with the secular government but rather the rigidly structured Spanish Catholic Church. In many cases, the power of the Church superseded that of the local provincial and municipal governments. The most apparent example of this power dynamic within *Noli Me Tángere* was when municipal representatives of San Diego deliberated how to celebrate the town's anniversary. The various representatives of the

municipal assembly were split between an extravagant fireworks display and a calm play that celebrated the founding of the town. Eventually, the San Diego assembly, led by the landholding elite through a lengthy and taxing debate, reached a compromise. However, when the assembly brought the solution to the San Diego mayor, he informed the municipal assembly that a decision had already been made by Father Dámaso, representing the empowered Church. To celebrate its anniversary, San Diego would hold a grand parade throughout the town that would celebrate San Diego's saints. In reality, the assembly debate was a formality — merely an obstacle to the desires of Father Dámaso. Thus the Church served as the center of power and authority, blocking the expanse of the *Mestizo* elite. The Church's abuse of power extended to all strata of life and created the common cultural foundation within the Philippines.

However, while the Church established commonalities across social strata and throughout the country, the Catholic Church also divided local communities. Traditionally, the social groups of the rural landed *hacenderos*, the urban *Mestizo* elite, the poor *Indios*, and outsiders like the coastal Chinese diaspora vied for local power against one another. However, the Church exacerbated these traditional obstacles. Primarily, the ways in which the separate social strata interacted with the Catholic Church created key divisions. Critically the Church's policy of selling indulgences as a means of repentance attached an individual's monetary and material wealth to their eternal soul, most notably benefiting those with landed estates. Those who possessed such wealth flaunted it. As one example, a sister within the Church bought an indulgence each day. In order to decide if she would save herself or lessen the suffering of a soul trapped in purgatory, she flipped a coin — ensuring to write down her deeds to have some form of ecclesiastical receipt. Rich landowning patrons of the Church also engaged in flamboyant, ostentatious displays of wealth to publicly announce their devotion to the Church. One example

was the conflict between Captain Santiago and Doña Patrocinio, two urban *Mestizo* elite, who sought the distinction of the most pious in San Diego by building decadent shrines to the Messiah and the Virgin. While both acted under the guise of piety, the competition merely echoed the competition for social domination already present within San Diego. For example, Captain Santiago derived his wealth from the illegal opium trade connected with the Chinese outsiders. The competition only ended when Captain Santiago succumbed to opium addiction, and Doña Patrocinio secured her local elite reputation. The overarching consequence of connecting the material with the spiritual was that the poor *Indios* desired religious reprieve from the material world, as they were more vulnerable to sin and the threat of purgatory. Thus these *Indios* were more subject to the will and authority of the Spanish fathers, as opposed to the *Mestizo* elite.

The Church quickly dealt with those who questioned the authority of the Church. Such was the case of Don Rafael Ibarra, a *haciendero* and the late father of Crisóstomo. Unlike Captain Santiago or Doña Patrocinio, Don Rafael Ibarra did not kowtow to Church authority and instead acted against it. Often, Don Rafael questioned the institutions and rites of the Church, such as confessional —

[D]o you think God pardons a crime, a murder, for example, solely because one tells it to a priest, who is, in the end, a man, and who has the duty to keep it to himself, and who is afraid of burning in hell, which is an act of attrition, who is a coward, and certainly without shame? I have another conception of God, [...] to me one does not correct one wrong by committing another, nor is one pardoned by useless weeping or by giving alms to church.²

Such statements and the growing popularity of Don Rafael made him dangerous to the institution of the Church. His discontent with the Church ultimately led to his attempts to establish a secular elite school, which would pit enlightened reason against the Catholic Church's traditional institutions. While the Church utilized European ideals as their center of control to maintain

longstanding partnerships with the *Mestizo* elite and to dominate the *Indio* peasants, Don Rafael became the antithesis to the intuitional Church, as someone who utilized European ideals emblematic of the secular *Ilustrados* to empower the people. By giving rise to the secular elite and eroding the institutional power of the Church, rising local urban elites intended to become independent of the Church and Spanish authority. This conflict reflected the contestation of power between the nationalistic elements of the *Mestizo* elite against the Spanish clergy. Don Rafael's stance against oppression extended even to the Spanish government, as he intervened on the behalf of a student who was harassed by a local tax collector. As a result of Don Rafael's intervention, the tax collector tripped and died. While traditionally such an offense would be written off as self-defense, under the influence of Fathers Dámaso and Sibyla the courts ruled harshly against Don Rafael and sentenced him to die. To add further disrespect, Father Sibyla believed that burying a supposed heretic in the church cemetery would be blasphemous, and insisted that the body should be buried in the heretical Chinese cemetery. However, on the day the body was moved, Don Rafael's body was lost and careened into the river never be found again. In this manner, the Church completely removed secular reason from the power structure of San Diego. Only when Don Rafael's son, Crisóstomo, returned from Europe did the mission of creating a secular education continue. Crisóstomo carried his father's legacy and represented the Enlightenment ideals throughout *Noli Me Tángere* which the *Ilustrado* engendered within the colonial Philippines. But, just like his father Crisóstomo faced opposition from the Church authorities.

The treatment of the peasant classes, who often lived in mountainous regions or the periphery of towns, further typified the corruption of justice. Within the novel, Rizal focuses on a young family comprised of two young brothers, Basilio and Crispín, and their struggling single

mother, Sisa. In a desperate attempt to improve her sons' opportunities in life, Sisa sent Basilio and Crispín to work for the church in San Diego. However, the Spanish clergy constantly abused the two young boys. Despite their strong work ethic, the boys were perceived as slovenly and sinful because of their race. As a result, the clergyman overseer reduced the boys' rightful meager pay to mere *pesos*. Eventually, both boys merely wished to return to their rural home and their mother, but Basilio and Crispín were denied leave. The young Crispín, unaware of the gravity of the situation, argued with the clergyman and was dragged to the church basement in the middle of the night — his fate left unknown. However, Basilio dreamt that Crispín was beaten bloody by Father Dámaso, known for his unrepentant wrath. Fearing for his own life, Basilio escaped from the San Diego church and returned to Sisa and later fled into the mountains to escape the influence of the *Guardia Civil*, the military police of the Spanish Philippines. In that time, Sisa went mad attempting to prove her sons' innocence and eventually became a beggar on the street, forgotten by the ever "pious" denizens of San Diego. After returning from the mountains, Basilio found his mother, who lost her mind. Unable to recognize her own son, she died in Basilio's arms. Such abuses committed by the clergy meant to maintain power and perpetuate their egotistical dominance ironically led to continual retaliation, inspiring peasant leaders like Elías, a poor *Indio* farmer, and eventually Crisóstomo, the aforementioned *Ilustrado*, to organize armed resistance.

Even staunch proponents of the Church suffered at its controlling hands. Rizal depicts the often backhanded and deceitful behavior of the Church through the plight of the de los Santos family. While the de los Santos family benefited from its longstanding partnership with the Church, the family was also abused and controlled by the Church fathers. The most heinous example was the conception of María Clara, the *Mestizo* daughter of Captain Santiago and the

longtime girlfriend of Crisóstomo. It is important to note that while María Clara exemplified the gentrified *Mestizo* class, she also served as Rizal's symbolic representation of the Philippines, as the virginal and untouched but widely desired beauty. While officially, she was the daughter of the native Filipinos Captain Santiago and Doña Pía Alba; in reality, she was conceived out of illicit sexual relations between Father Dámaso and Doña Pía Alba. Rizal claims through this relationship that the Philippines was a product of foreign coercion rather than consensual agreements. Father Dámaso retained control of his daughter by becoming María Clara's godfather, symbolic of Spanish control and domination over the Philippines. Further still, Father Dámaso's control over María Clara's future brought her to depression and desperation. Rizal's engagement of María Clara, the emblem of the Philippines, to Crisóstomo, the emblem of the European Enlightenment and Filipino *Ilustrado*, illustrated a happy and healthy relationship, where both individuals could flourish and grow into the better future, symbolizing Rizal's hope for the Philippines. However, due to Father Dámaso's antagonism to Crisóstomo's supposedly radical Enlightenment ideals, the engagement was broken and María Clara sank into a deep depression, emblematic of the Philippines divorce from the Enlightenment under Catholic influence. Despite Father Dámaso's attempts to find a new suitor who would please María Clara, she became resistant and despondent to his efforts. In retaliation, she provided Father Dámaso an ultimatum, either the convent or the grave. Unwilling to lose his daughter, Father Dámaso relented and allowed María Clara to enter the convent, but even here the abuses of the Church did not end. Rizal implied that within the walls of the convent that Father Sibyla sexually abused María Clara, which led to her hysteria. Rizal illustrated this chilling last scene in the epilogue —

Who moans in the middle of the night, in spite of the wind, the rain, and the storm? Who is this timid virgin, the bride of Christ who defies the unleashed elements and chooses such an extraordinary night and open sky to exhale from a dangerous height her complaints to God? Has the Lord abandoned his temple in the convent and is not listening to

supplications? Will they not leave his vaults so that the soul's aspiration can rise to the throne of the Merciful? [...] Desperate complaints, mixed with the wind's sighing, went on, but they found nature and men deaf to them. God watched over them, and did not hear.³

Thus Rizal's depiction of the Philippines is a land both without reason and without God, only left to the sufferings of man.

The Philippines of *Noli Me Tángere* depicts a harsh world with a deep-rooted sickness. *Noli Me Tángere* translated as *The Social Cancer* directly addresses Rizal's themes. The issue within the Philippines is its social foundations that are centered in the power of the Spanish Church, which seeps corruption and abuse into the fabric of society as amply detailed in the course of the novel. Herein the novel is focal on the "evil" Church as the foundation for injustice and the base of power in the colonial Philippines. Thus the civil authority is evil, but ultimately this demonic force is an agent for the Catholic Church. Both Crisóstomo and Basilio witnessed the deeply rooted abuse as an elite *Mestizo* and poor *Indio* respectively. Ultimately, *Noli Me Tángere* is merely the diagnosis, and Rizal's attempted prescriptions fail. Don Rafael and Crisóstomo's attempts to fight skepticism with reason, isolate them from the deeply religious society of the Philippines. More radical ideas such as those engendered by Elías are defeated by the strong institutions of the Spanish government and the Catholic Church. Even Sisa's attempt to work within the system of the Church is met with disastrous failure. Rizal finds that the fate of the Philippines is left hanging in the balance, represented by a woman screaming in the storm hoping that her prayers will not fall on deaf ears.

Set thirteen years after the supposed death of Crisóstomo Ibarra, *El Filibusterismo* returned to San Diego to examine the social problems which plagued the colonial Philippines. Within Rizal's Philippines, little changed within the social structure. Like in *Noli Me Tángere*, the rural poor continued to suffer under the Spanish Church as the true authority behind the

landholding elite. Even those who worked within the system of the Church often found themselves still tied to the Church's mercy. Rizal illustrates the Church's continued power with the fate of Cablesang Tales de Dios. Like many young *Indio* men, Tales and his young family claimed land near San Diego and started a farm. The farm represented both the family's sacrifices and prospects, as Tales's wife and eldest daughter died during the clearing of the land, however, due to the family's hard work and labor the land became prosperous. Because of this, a local Catholic religious order laid claim to the land and demanded a small tax from Tales. Despite the fact that the friars' claims were fictitious, Tales paid the taxes to avoid further conflict. But, over time, as the farm became more prosperous, the friars demanded a higher tax which eventually rose beyond Tales's means. Naively believing that the courts would support him, Tales pursued a case against the friars which he summarily lost. Unwilling to relinquish the land that his wife and daughter died for, Tales protected his farm by stalking the perimeter armed with a gun. As those in San Diego grew wary of Tales, his gun was eventually confiscated by the local government. After his gun was taken, he continued his vigil with a *bolo*; and after the *bolo* was taken, he continued on with an ax. As a result of his disarmament, when bandits attacked his farm Tales could not stop them. The bandits took Tales into the forest and held him for ransom. In order to pay the ransom demanded of them, the de Dios family sold all their valuables. Still unable to pay the ransom, Tales's youngest daughter Juli sold herself into indentured servitude to Sister Penchang, who hoped to save the young girl's soul. Thus in order to reconcile the damage done to her family by the Church, Juli entered into the service of the Spanish Church. Like María Clara before her, Father Camorra advanced on her, and rather than enduring rape she threw herself out the window to her death. Through these depictions, Rizal illustrates the Philippines as still firmly under the control of the Spanish Church.

Throughout *El Filibusterismo* Rizal discusses the future of the Philippines. Either the islands would assimilate to Spanish culture or would revolt against its Spanish masters and therein provide wider societal equality. By examining the perspectives of Basilio and Crisóstomo, Rizal explores both options for Filipino nationalists. Through Basilio, now a young college student, Rizal explores the possibility of the societal assimilation of the Philippines. Throughout *Noli Me Tángere* the Ibarra's solely championed the crusade to secularize education, but in *El Filibusterismo* the Student Union continued the Ibarra's legacy. Historically, the Spanish fathers dominated education in the Philippines, and like the Church congregation, students were completely at the mercy of the Spanish fathers. Often, these institutions actively defused revolutionary sentiment within the student body. Throughout the novel, Rizal illustrates numerous examples where Spanish fathers abused, shamed, and ridiculed their students. The prime example was Father Millón, who demanded that students commit every lesson to memory and failed those unable to regurgitate the information perfectly. Further confusing students, Father Millón often spoke in Latin, a language known only to the Catholic clergy. Like the institution of the Church, the newly emerging colleges were subject to the whims of the Spanish fathers. One such example was Plácido's absences. Despite only being physically absent four times, Father Millón asserted that Plácido was absent twenty times, each of his absences considered equivalent to five absences. In fact, Father Millón had been lenient since he only recorded fifteen absences. Such abuses sought to smother the pride and individuality which would create political dissidents like Crisóstomo. The Church fathers successfully created fear amongst the student body about the consequences of joining an organization that actively worked against the interests of the Catholic Church.

Despite the Spanish fathers' threats, many students were still galvanized and joined the Student Union, like Basilio. The Student Union advocated for the assimilation of the Philippines by promoting secular education as a new societal foundation. Specifically, the Student Union argued for the establishment of the Castilian Academy, similar to the school that the Ibarra once attempted to establish. The Castilian Academy would teach *Indios* to speak Spanish, the language of the elite *Peninsulares*, pure-blooded Spanish, and *Mestizos*, of mixed Spanish bloodlines, thus allowing the *Indios* access to the same information as the other social classes. While not directly leading to significant change, the pursuit of secular education would empower *Indios* to assimilate into Spanish culture and be recognized as a modern power as opposed to the illiterate agrarian foundations. To achieve this goal, the Student Union committed to nonviolent action and promoted broader societal equality through organizing demonstrations and engaging in arguments with those in power. However, such demonstrations precipitated little change. Most of the populace, even the *Indios* that the Student Union claimed to represent, believed that the students disrespected the authority of the Church. Even liberal fathers like the Spanish Father Fernández argued that the students were hypocrites by slandering the Church while maintaining a respectable facade. Isagani, the leader of the Student Union argued —

It's not their fault, Father [...] It's the fault of the people who taught them to be hypocrites, of the people who tyrannize freedom of thought and freedom of speech. Here any independent thought, any word that does not echo the will of the powerful, is called *filibusterismo*, and you know well what that means. It's madness for anyone to have the pleasure of saying what he thinks aloud, because he's courting persecution.⁴

Isagani's sentiment was further supported by the death of Rafael Ibarra and the persecution of Crisóstomo Ibarra whom both stood against the authority of the Church and argued for the secularization of the Philippines. Accosted by Church fathers, unable to ignite the masses, and denounced by the Governor-General — the Student Union failed to create the Castilian

Academy. Ultimately the system which the Spanish *Mestizos* and the Catholic Church designed, relied on a subservient class of *Indios* that were deliberately separated from the Spanish elite. Thus, any attempt at assimilation could only end in failure.

While in *Noli Me Tángere*, Crisóstomo Ibarra struggled to achieve the assimilation that the Student Union championed, in *El Filibusterismo* Crisóstomo Ibarra returned as an agent of radical revolutionary change. Previously defeated by the Spanish Catholic Church, he returned disguised as Simoun the Black Cardinal, an agent of revenge for his dead father and in search of his lover. In *Noli Me Tángere* Crisóstomo clashed with the Catholic Church and the Spanish government as an outsider, however in *El Filibusterismo* he worked within the structure of the Spanish elite and became one of the Captain-General's closest confidants and advisers. As Simoun, Crisóstomo utilized his remaining wealth to purchase precious gems and metals to create world-class jewelry. The richest *Mestizos* on the islands comprised his clientele, which provided him access to social capital throughout the Spanish Philippines. Before, Crisóstomo desired to maintain the middle ground hoping to empower the *Indios* within the Spanish system, but as Simoun, he created tension between the landed *Mestizo* elite and the poor *Indio* populations in the hopes of starting a peasant revolt. With his immense influence within the secular government, Crisóstomo argued for increased restrictions on the *Indio* population. At the same time, Crisóstomo utilized his profits from his jewelry business to purchase weapons and ammunition from a local Chinese outsider to arm a burgeoning revolutionary army, which mirrored the actions of peasant leaders like Elías in *Noli Me Tángere*.

However, Simoun failed to ignite the revolution. Despite gathering weaponry, gaining political influence, and securing an alliance with the aforementioned Cablesang Tales, the new leader of the bandits who once threatened his life, Simoun could not complete his revenge. First,

while Simoun and Cablesang Tales primed the revolutionary elements to strike during a town play, Simoun discovered that María Clara died in the convent due to sexual abuse from Father Salví. Losing his sense of purpose Simoun was unable to strike. Cablesang Tales and the rest of the insurgents slipped back quietly in the night, unwilling to waste the resources that they meticulously gathered. Their opportunity for redemption arrived in the form of a wedding where all the major secular and religious leaders of San Diego were meeting in one location. Simoun rigged the house to explode with a force that would obliterate all those within — the Black Cardinal awaited his revenge. However, his compassion for Basilio led to the plan's downfall. Initially, the two disagreed on how to empower the *Indios*. Basilio, an *Indio* member of the Student Union advocated for the Castilian Academy enabling the *Indios* to earn their own independence, and Crisóstomo, an old elite called for a revolution that would dispose of the Church clergy and its elite allies, igniting the rural poor into violent conflict. Basilio fundamentally disagreed with Crisóstomo, rather than damning *Indios* and beginning a prolonged war, Basilio argued the liberal elite must enable the *Indios* to liberate themselves by supporting the Castilian Academy. Despite their conflicting viewpoints the two formed an unsteady agreement. The debate between these two fictive characters paralleled the ideological differences between Rizal and his aggressive contemporaries, like Andrés Bonifacio. However, rather than favoring his own reformatory policies, Rizal criticizes both forms of revolution — reformatory and revolutionary. As the story progresses Simoun saw more of himself in Basilio, who recently lost a father figure in Captain Santiago and a lover in Juli de Dios. Simoun gave Basilio the opportunity for his own revenge and granted him a position of leadership in the battles to come. Simoun informed Basilio of the explosives rigged at the wedding. Aghast at the potential loss of innocent life, Basilio rushed to the wedding to warn his friend Isagani, the leader of the Student

Union. Despite the abuses, he suffered under the clergy and the gentry, Isagani could not allow so many to die in the blast and disarmed the fuse, ending the second attempt at revolution.

Simoun, bloodied after a final altercation with the *Guardia Civil*, hid within the home of Father Florentino, an *Indio* priest sympathetic to Crisóstomo. The two engaged in a debate, regarding the future of the movement. While Father Florentino agreed that the plight of the Filipinos was deplorable, Crisóstomo's willingness to sacrifice the blood and spirit of the Philippines meant that his plans would never come to fruition. Crisóstomo retorted that the Filipinos should be willing to pay any cost so long as the subservient position of the *Indios* was reversed. He further stated, that if God was as righteous as the fathers claim, then the continual abuse cannot persist. However, Father Florentino insisted that while God was sympathetic to the *Indios*, revolution by the sword could not be supported by providence. Crisóstomo conceded but asked the father what was the path to change. Father Florentino responded —

Suffer and work. [...] the school of suffering tempered us, the arena of combat gives vigor to our souls. [...] The sword comes into play, barely, in modern destiny, but yes, we must win when we deserve it, by elevating reason and the dignity of the individual, loving justice and the good and the great, even dying for it, and when people reaches those heights, God will supply the weapons and bring down the idols and make tyrants fall like houses of card and then freedom will shine like the first dawn.⁵

Hearing these words, Crisóstomo slipped into death, a man ravaged by revenge and unable to fulfill the promise of change he issued thirteen years prior.

El Filibusterismo continues the themes of *Noli Me Tángere*, in specific Rizal's last novel examines the victims of *Noli Me Tángere*. Basilio, an *Indio* who by all means should be unable to improve his social condition, became an educated young man. Despite his attempts to secure the path to social mobility that enabled him to become successful, the power structure of the Philippines resisted the liberal reform of the Student Union. Ultimately Basilio's pursuit of liberalizing the Philippines led to his own demise. Crisóstomo, a husk of the ideals that he once

embodied, sought vengeance against those who forced him into exile. Righteousness corrupted into vengeance. The resources that once enabled him to become a member of the European Enlightenment were now used to create suffering in the Philippines in the name of priming the archipelago for revolution. A man who was once willing to sacrifice himself for the sake of change now argued for the sacrifice of others for his personal mission of revenge. There is a bittersweet melancholy that surrounds Crisóstomo, as an idealist who lost his sense of justice.

While *Noli Me Tángere* identifies the social cancer that permeates throughout the Philippines, *El Filibusterismo* examines the remedies. For Rizal, neither assimilation nor revolution could elicit meaningful change. Instead, Rizal promoted a thesis of “suffer and work,” which is frighteningly apologetic to the Spanish colonial power that exploited the Philippines since its inception. His once great cry of social cancer now softens to a whimper, asking his contemporaries to wait for the act of God that will free the islands from the yoke of colonialism. Perhaps this complacency comes from Rizal’s recognition of the power of the European nations. Rizal argued that no matter how desperately the *Indios* struggle against their restraints, without access to social and political resources, the Philippines will always remain subservient.

Overall Rizal’s novels discuss at length the great obstacles which prevent the strong nationalistic movement which revolutionaries desired. Primarily, Rizal identifies three major divisions that prevent the development of a strong united Filipino identity. The first division is between the secular and the ecclesiastical, with the Spanish Catholic Church in a contest with local and municipal governments. While both institutions were dependent on a subservient *Indio* class, both fought for the authority over the Philippines rather than working as a united front. The second division is the division between rural and urban. The Philippines had a vast rural population, however, authority over the islands rests within local towns; the largest center of

authority was the city of Manila. This led to a disconnection between the affluent coastal cities and the poorer, more isolated rural populations. The last and most important division is the racially motivated class system perpetuated by the Spanish colonial government which created the deepest schism within the Philippines. Within this system, those with mixed Spanish blood, *Mestizos*, held the majority of the power. This enabled them to earn a Western education, which would lead to the development of the *Ilustrados*. On the other hand, *Indios* of mainly of native blood remained largely subservient and the systems within the Philippines sustained their lower position. This system became more complicated as more groups were introduced such as the Chinese *Sangley*, the African *Negrito*, and eventually the white *Americano*. Nevertheless, this system of racial division meant that Filipinos could not unite under a single sense of national identity. While *Ilustrado* like Rizal forged a collective identity, the further disagreements within the Filipino nationalist movement merely added more obstacles to the already fractious Philippines. These three key divisions and the fractious nature of Filipino nationalism would continue onwards through the twentieth and twenty-first century, which is reflected in the literature of the time.

Various authors continued the literary tradition set by José Rizal further examining the themes therein. Overall this body of literature focuses on the same core themes of *Noli Me Tángere* and *El Filibusterismo*. In so doing, these authors addressed specific issues relating to Filipino nationalism and identity.

Linda Ty-Casper, born in 1931 in the province of Rizal, focuses primarily on the position of the *Mestizos* as an elite class within Filipino society. Her novel, *The Three-Cornered Sun*, illustrates the lives of the Viardo family, an urban *Mestizo* family living in Manila. Unlike *Noli Me Tángere* and *El Filibusterismo* which explores the pre-revolutionary Philippines, *The Three-*

Cornered Sun examines the start of the Philippine Revolution. Casper's main character, Cristobal Viardo, was an officer within the *Katipunan*, the revolutionary organization of the Philippines. While Rizal sympathized with the plights of the *Mestizos* such as Crisóstomo and María Clara, Ty-Casper criticized the *Mestizos* position both within the old Spanish hierarchy and within the new revolutionary order.

First, while Ty-Casper becomes critical of the position of the *Mestizos*, she still retains Rizal's sympathy for the *Mestizos* as a class of individuals whose fragile social status can be rescinded by the Spanish ruling elite. Ty-Casper asserts that *Mestizos* did not enter alliances with the Spanish ruling class out of choice, but out of necessity. Within *The Three-Cornered Sun*, this was evidenced by Angel Viardo, who invested the family funds into the social structure of the Philippines, offering loans to Catholic priests, *Guardia Civil* captains, and other members of high society. He did this knowing that many of these loans would not be repaid but rather acknowledged that these payments were a necessary measure to maintain the family's social status as urban elites. Angel's relationship with his wife, Vitoria Viardo, also echoed these themes. A bitter Spanish woman, Vitoria reluctantly lived in the Philippines due to her family's lack of resources. However, she desired to maintain the veneer of high society by throwing lavish parties, utilizing the resources that Angel maintained. As a result, Vitoria dominated the marriage, and in turn, Angel accepted his subservient position. In order to maintain social appearances and create the image of a happy marriage, Angel acknowledged the necessity of such costs. In the same way, Angel's social investments maintained a veneer of power and strength which provided privileges to the Viardo family. Thus, Ty-Casper recognized the subservient and unenviable position of the *Mestizo* class as one distancing itself from the Filipino people but not recognized as part of Spanish high society.

Nevertheless, Ty-Casper criticizes the *Mestizos* dominant position in society, especially within the nationalist movement. Like Rizal, Ty-Casper recognizes internal conflict within the revolutionary movement caused primarily by the *Mestizo* elite. Within *The Three-Cornered Sun*, two major conflicts manifested in the early revolution. The first major conflict was between Cristobal and his uncle Simeon. As mentioned previously Cristobal became a member of the radical and militaristic *Katipunan*, founded by the *Indio* hero Andrés Bonifacio and his contemporaries, in direct opposition to more moderate groups like the Propaganda Movement, led by José Rizal. Rizal's organization attempted to elicit sympathy within the Spanish people, in the hopes of the Philippines earning representation in the Spanish government. Simeon and older revolutionaries joined these more moderate groups. A romantic sense of nationalism and self-sacrifice dominated this generation of revolutionaries. Ty-Casper illustrated this through Simeon's reminiscence of Spain which highlighted how many of his comrades died as martyrs to the cause, many of whom starved in the streets of Spain. Barely surviving, Simeon returned to the Philippines and rejected the comforts of his *Mestizo* class as a method of maintaining the image of the suffering nationalist. Simeon locked himself within the house and refused to interact with the outside world. In this sense, Ty-Casper criticizes the suffering of the *Mestizos* as something imagined and fictitious, rather than caused by actual societal inequities. Simeon's depression only deepened when the Spanish executed Rizal. However, despite his fatalistic attitude Simeon, like Rizal, defended the Spanish government's legitimacy and actively sought to protect the Spanish government. Like Basilio's Student Union and Crisóstomo's revolutionary organization, the conflicting ideologies of the young *Katipunan* and the older Propaganda Movement collided when the *Katipunan* planned to assassinate the Governor-General. As Cristobal aimed for the Governor-General, Simon pushed the gun away, which led to Cristobal's

failure. Ty-Casper illustrates that rather than create a united front, the Filipino nationals actively worked against one another and could not achieve either of their goals. The second conflict within the *Katipunan*, between Andrés Bonifacio and Emilio Aguinaldo, echoed similar themes. Bonifacio, as the initial *Supremo* of the *Katipunan*, embodied the ideals of the self-made *Indio* scholar and warrior. Early on under his leadership, the *Katipunan* seized early victories by engaging in small skirmishes. However, the *Katipunan*'s momentum halted as they began to engage with the Spanish forces in entrenched positions, in traditional European warfare. The inexperienced officer corps compounded these problems when they failed to seize vital opportunities and press tactical advantages. Cristobal encountered such difficulties numerous times throughout *The Three-Cornered Sun*, especially as the *Katipunan* closed in on Manila. Throughout numerous offensives, Cristobal urged the other commanders to press advantages, but many of his colleagues contented themselves by waiting in comfortable defensive positions. Often many of these units stationed at small villages abused the hospitality of the residents, which greatly troubled Cristobal's uncle Jacob, an ordained *Mestizo* priest. To Jacob, the *Katipunan*'s mistreatment of the rural poor delayed the *Katipunan*'s victory despite a just cause. While Cristobal agreed with these sentiments and attempted to lead his unit in a morally just way, many within his unit strained against such restrictions as the *Katipunan* relied on the rural poor to support their continued campaign. Thus, Cristobal founded his morality on European beliefs. In many ways, while Cristobal and Jacob were revolutionaries dedicated to the mission of the *Katipunan*, their inability to separate the movement from European traditions and moralities unhinged and contradicted the movement. Cristobal's dedication to European ideals also allowed him to achieve success in traditional European encounters, unlike many military commanders under Bonifacio. While the *Katipunan* secured early victories as a result of utilizing

guerrilla tactics which were more successful in the rural provinces of the Philippines, as the *Katipunan* advanced into more traditional and urban settings, the *Katipunan* could not adapt. Many extrapolated these fears to Bonifacio's leadership as a whole and questioned his capability of forming a modern European style government. As a result, Emilio Aguinaldo executed Andrés Bonifacio and assumed leadership of the *Katipunan*. As such, Aguinaldo's actions represented a shift in the *Katipunan* away from its *Indio* foundations under Bonifacio to *Mestizo* leadership under Aguinaldo. Thus the already fractious and discordant *Katipunan* further disintegrated as indicated by Cristobal's fears that other commanders would assassinate him because of his loyalty to Bonifacio. Due to these conflicts, both older and more conservative elements of the nationalist movement stunted the *Katipunan*. Notably, the actions of conservative *Mestizo* revolutionaries led to both the failed assassination of the Governor-General and the disastrous transition of power within the *Katipunan*.

However, Ty-Casper's most damning portrayal of the *Mestizo* class is Blas, Cristobal's father. Unlike other members of his family, Blas never fully committed to any of the various institutions of the colonial Philippines: the colonial government, the Catholic Church, or revolutionary elements, radical or conservative. Rather Blas spent most of his time gambling in illicit dens, populated by elites who sought to escape the prying eyes of the Church. These gambling habits indicated Blas's approach to the revolution in an attempt to maintain neutrality. As a wise gambler, rather than betting all his resources on a single institution of the revolutionary period, he curried favor with all of the institutions in order to maintain his societal status no matter how the Philippine Revolution concluded. This is Ty-Casper's ultimate criticism of the *Mestizo* class; sympathetic to the nationalist movement or not, the privileged class of *Mestizos* resisted the effects of the revolution. Ty-Casper's criticism is further reflected in

Cristobal, who she argues invested little into the nationalist movement, relying instead on the structure of the *Katipunan* and the rural poor to provide arms and rations. Ultimately the poor rural *Indios* sacrificed crops, land, and sons to fight for their freedom and representation in the new government. When the *Katipunan* failed and signed the *Biak-na-Bato* Pact, the rural poor suffered the greatest consequences. *Mestizos* like the Viardos retained their societal status. Even Cristobal's wounded leg, his greatest sacrifice to the cause, was implied to be treatable. But like Simeon, Cristobal maintained his wound in an effort to maintain his martyrdom and argued that he too lost in the war.

Ty-Casper's criticizes the *Mestizo* class harshly in comparison to Rizal. While Rizal is not dismissive of the *Mestizo* class's transgressions against *Indios* and *filibusterismos*, he ultimately celebrates characters like Crisóstomo and María Clara, members of the *Mestizo* class whom he illustrated as victims of the corrupt Catholic system. However, Ty-Casper asserts that *Mestizos* like the Viardos have a tentative relationship with the nationalist movement. In *The Three-Cornered Sun*, the majority of *Mestizos* are reflected in Blas and Angel, who pursued self-interest and self-preservation above all else. While there may be individuals like Jacob and Cristobal who supported and fought for the national cause, many of these individuals staked little and maintained their dominant social position, as the Viardos did when *Biak-na-Bato* Pact was signed. Further still, revolutionaries like Simeon and Cristobal exacerbated losses to maintain the image of romantic nationals, who sacrificed everything for the cause of the Philippines. The central issues within *The Three-Cornered Sun* echo *El Filibusterismo*'s conflict of social class. As the fractious nationalist movement continued to suffer sustained internal conflict due to differences between *Mestizo* and *Indio* leadership, the nationalist movement failed to unify against the greater threat of the Spanish Colonial Government.

Throughout the revolutionary period, other regions outside of Luzon also resisted Spanish rule. Resistance grew strongest throughout the Visayas, leading to the development of the Negros Republic. Alfred Yuson, born in 1945, and Eric Gamalinda, born in 1956, explore the various Visayan revolutionaries. While Rizal and Ty-Casper focus on *Mestizo* protagonists like Crisóstomo and Cristobal, Yuson and Gamalinda center their narratives on *Indio* protagonists. In Yuson's *Great Philippine Jungle Energy Café*, the protagonist León Kilat, born in Negros, traveled to Luzon and Cebu and participated in the Filipino revolutionary movement. And Gamalinda's *My Sad Republic* illustrates the life of Isio the Pope, a central figure to the Negros Republic. While neither possess great historical fidelity as Yuson utilizes magical realism throughout his narrative and Gamalinda overstates the role of Isio the Pope and fails to mention other historic leaders like Aniceto Lacson and Juan Araneta who led the short-lived Negros Republic, both narratives are vital to understanding important aspects of the revolution and the Filipino identity as a whole. Both focus on the cultural and religious warfare of the Philippine Revolution, adding political depth to Rizal and Ty-Casper's narrative. Beyond this, both narratives also express how the ideals of the revolution connect beyond the time period and into the modern day.

Yuson and Gamalinda's depiction of the Philippines mirrors Rizal and Ty-Casper's depiction. Primarily both narratives centralize on the conflict between *Mestizos* and *Indios*. Yuson's narrative begins on the island of Negros in the town of Bacong. Like the rest of the Philippines, both the Catholic Church and the *Guardia Civil* dominated Bacong. Due to León's disrespect for both these institutions, ejaculating inside the church and tripping unto a captain of the *Guardia Civil*, Padre Salsa and Anatalio of the *Guardia Civil* physically attacked León. Out of fear for his life, León hid within the mountains of Negros. Gamalinda's narrative focuses on

similar abuses. Isio was initially a rural farmer who migrated from Panay to Negros. Once there he began working the plantations like many local Negrense, specifically under the rule of Doña Madrigal, the matron of the Victorias Plantation. Doña Madrigal, like other *hacenderos*, provided a meager wage to her plantation workers but perpetuated a system of debt that indentured the worker to the land by seizing their rightful pay on the grounds that she provided room and board for the Negrense workers. Nevertheless, poor *Indios*, like Isio, migrated to plantations seeking better employment opportunities than those provided in the rural Philippines. Gamalinda further illustrates Rizal's critiques of the *Guardia Civil*, which utilized its authority to support the exploitative Philippine *hacienda* system. The longstanding partnerships between *hacenderos* and the *Guardia Civil* stemmed from their shared sense of *Mestizo* identity and both of these institutions relied on a subservient *Indio* population. Thus they worked together to maintain the status quo. Tomas Agustin was most indicative of these partnerships. Tomas was born into the wealthy *Mestizo* class, the young heir to a Spanish plantation. However, when his parents died his lifetime prospects died with them. After their death, various neighbors like Doña Madrigal bought his land. In order to maintain some sense of stewardship over the land, Tomas joined the *Guardia Civil* and carefully maintained social partnerships with the local *hacenderos*. Because of his service to Doña Madrigal, the matron eventually desired a match between Tomas and her granddaughter, Asunción de Urquiza.

Asunción's narrative mirrored María Clara's. Christened in the honor of the one hundred seventeen names of the Virgin Mary, Asunción represented the virginal and pure Philippines. Within her youth, she fell in love with Isio and they consummated this love throughout the course of their relationship. However, due to the social and political benefits of marrying Tomas, Doña Madrigal arranged the contentious couple. Assuming that Asunción already belonged to

him, Tomas raped Asunción. Through Asunción's relationships, Gamalinda indicates his beliefs on Spanish colonization. Asunción and Isio's heated and passionate sex symbolizes Gamalinda's belief that the Philippines before colonization was dominated by emotionality and carnality, as young relationships are. This juxtaposed to the violation of Asunción by Tomas which indicated the unequal power relationship in the colonial period. Unlike María Clara who found her power and resisted the demands of Dámaso, Asunción, believing that resisting Tomas would be futile, capitulated to the demands of her grandmother. Through this analogy, Gamalinda argues that the *Indios* do not possess the political and social capital that *Mestizos* possess which were required to protect the Philippines.

Due to these various abuses, the revolutionary movement throughout the Visayan Islands began. Yuson and Gamalinda discuss how these lack of resources led revolutionaries to use mysticism and magic as a method of resistance. Central to the *Great Philippine Jungle Energy Café* was the banana's charm, which when bestowed upon pure men imbued them with magical abilities. While in hiding the banana's charm blessed León, connecting him to the mysteries of the world.

Leon saw Rizal shot in the Bagumbayan, bicycles and ice coming to his country, the American, Nick Joaquin, Gary Cooper, the Japanese, cassette recorders, the Germans holding hands with macho dancers in Puerto Galera. [...] In his stillness Leon knew the charm entering him was a powerful one. He knew that on this night of the new moon he had been launched into the company of select spirits who would one day assemble with their friends to drink Irish coffee in the Great Philippine Jungle Energy Café.⁶

Empowered by the charm, León returned to Bacong where Padre Salsa and the *Guardia Civil* stood against him. In a great feat of strength, León disarmed the *Guardia Civil*, ripped apart their guns, and sent them into retreat. Bending a gun into a mockery of Padre Salsa's cane, León paddled Padre Salsa and the remainder of the *Guardia Civil*. While clearly an instance of magical realism, León's encounter in Bacong symbolized how mysticism empowered *Indios* to

battle the skepticism of the Catholic Church and the rigidity of the *Guardia Civil*. What further strengthened this connection was León's ability to summon *Agua de Mayo*, which signaled the end of the summer. Yuson argues that the long summer of Spanish rule ended because *Indios* could connect with the mystic and mythical power of the Philippines. Various Filipino leaders utilized mysticism to resist Spanish Rule. One such leader was Dios Buhawi, whom León connected with after fleeing Bacong. As a kindred spirit who also caught the charm, Dios Buhawi possessed similar abilities. Legend proclaimed his fists were made of stone and he moved as fast as a waterspout, his namesake. Historically, Dios Buhawi would form a small religious organization on the island of Negros, which eventually evolved into a religious insurgent group. While Dios Buhawi did not directly join the Philippine Revolution, he contributed to the revolutionary fervor and trained secular leaders like León Kilat. Yuson utilizes this connection to demonstrate how the religious and the revolutionary are intertwined.

Gamalinda's fictionalization of Isio the Pope also centralized on the pseudo-religious nature of the revolution. Mysticism dominated the lives of the *Indios*, as was exemplified when the peasants stumbled upon a sand hill in the middle of a field. To the surprise of the *Guardia Civil*, the *Indio* farmers refused to work believing that a gnome lived within the sand hill who would curse those who disturbed his home. Only under the threat of death did the farmers continue their work. Another example of mysticism occurred when Tomas ordered the executions of disobedient farmers and discarded the corpses in the neighboring woods. When other farmers found the bodies, they believed that Vampires sated their thirst by consuming human heads. Gamalinda demonstrates how the *Indios* understood the world through their myths and legends. Like Rizal, Gamalinda also indicates how Catholicism and mysticism were similar to one another. Doña Madrigal provided the clearest example of Catholic mysticism, as she

prayed for miracles from the saints and continually sought the hand of God in her daily life. Yet when seeking a cure to her debilitating illness, she searched for healers and mystics throughout the Visayan Islands. This earned the Victorias Plantation a reputation for housing those with healing powers. Isio was one such healer, whom Doña Madrigal believed could heal her and thus invested in his education. Her blind belief in the spiritual reached to extremes however, like when Tomas raped Asunción, Doña Madrigal interpreted the heinous act as divine providence that the young couple should get married. Mysticism was tied within the psyche and identity of all Filipinos.

Crucially, mysticism, which terrorized the psyche of the Negrense, emboldened the *Indios* during the revolution. Specifically, their belief in the mystical and unexplainable led them to blind, unyielding faith to their revolutionary leaders. Often these leaders would perform miracles and assume religious names. For example, the legend of Isio's healing power evolved, and the Victorias Plantation workers believed that Isio could become invisible and the mere symbol of his name could protect others from harm.

[The soldiers of the Pope] mingled with peasants and informed them of the vision of the Pope and the need to defend their mission. They told that the Pope had gained even greater powers to withstand the forthcoming apocalypse, and that from here on, whenever they invoked his name they would be granted everlasting life, and no bullets could harm them.⁷

These ideas of magical charms were not uncommon, but the belief in these charms revealed the religious fervor within the movement. Such fanaticism led to both Dios Buhawi and Isio the Pope's early successes. While the Spanish forces eventually defeated Dios Buhawi, his followers continued their mission under Isio the Pope who expelled *Mestizo* landlords from Negros. Other mystics joined Isio's movement as well, including the young Santa Regina. Believed to be blessed by the gift of the Virgin Mary, many invented narratives that claimed Regina retained her

virginal purity, despite the fact that Santa Regina joined the revolution because a Spanish soldier raped her. Regardless, the beliefs in her purity extended to her perceived magical abilities, as many of the soldiers drank Regina's bathwater believing that it possessed curative properties. Throughout the story, Gamalinda interrogates the idea of mysticism and miracles. Despite not being founded in reality, mysticism affected the psyche of the revolutionaries by strengthening the *Indios* beliefs and providing the courage needed to overcome insurmountable odds.

Despite similar foundations in spiritualism and mysticism, the two social classes of *Indios* and *Mestizos* came into direct conflict. A major point of contention for the Negros Republic was the identity of the Negrense. As a result, Isio the Pope adopted his policy of expulsion towards the *Mestizos*, which led to a crusade against the *hacenderos*. While this allowed him to contest the power of his rival, Tomas Agustin, it also placed Isio against his benefactor Doña Madrigal and his lover Asunción de Urquiza. As a result of Isio's policy many *Mestizos* fled the island and sought asylum in Iloilo, Panay, protected both by the new Philippine Government and the United States military. As a third party, the United States sought to restore stability to the islands and adopted an inclusive doctrine for citizenship, which included both *Indios* and *Mestizos* amongst other various social classes. In pursuit of these goals, the United States sent Captain James Smith to negotiate with Isio the Pope and argued that the Negros Republic should welcome the *Mestizo hacenderos* who also called Negros home. Isio relented as he came to recognize that Negros fell into ruin as the *Indio* farmers, drunk on their new found freedom, were resistant to working and building a long lasting republic. Allowing a few *Mestizos* to return, Isio witnessed the land became fertile once again under the experienced leadership of the landed elite. Thus out of necessity, rather than principle, Isio the Pope accepted the presence

of the *Mestizo* elite. However, the *Mestizos* betrayed Isio's trust when the news of American interference in the Philippine Revolution emboldened the *Mestizos* to retake the island of Negros.

Over time many supporters of the Negros Republic faded away, assimilating back into the established social structure, weakening the Negros Republic's power, and pushing Isio the Pope to retreat to the volcanic slopes where his movement started. The revolution's ranks continued to thin as many of Isio's followers sought to enter the modern world of the American Philippines, even important revolutionary leaders. Among them was Santa Regina who joined a vocational school where she learned Western sensibilities and joined a Christian household. However, the strong foundation of the Negros Revolution, Isio the Pope, remained in defiance of the American Philippines. Only after years of hunting General James Smith, promoted for his service in the Philippine-American War, found and arrested Isio the Pope. In jail, Isio and Tomas met for the final time. Tomas stared down in disappointment, hoping to challenge the devil but instead found an old man, worn and withered by years of resistance.

Similarly, León Kilat confronted the erosion of the Philippine Revolution throughout the *Great Philippine Jungle Energy Café*. Primarily, after León joined the Katipunan, he witnessed the tension within the movement itself. Manila, as the heart of the Philippines, was dominated by outside influences brought in by the *Ilustrado* elite. Yuson illustrates homes filled with German, French, Spanish, English, and Chinese decadence, purchased by the elites as symbols of status and wealth. Thus the great contradiction of the Philippine Revolution was a desire to distance the Philippines from European influence by utilizing the power of the European Enlightenment as opposed to the rural lifestyle of the *Indio* towns throughout the rest of the Philippines. The differences in class exacerbated these rural and urban divisions, as the *Ilustrado* class was derivative of the *Mestizo* elite who had access to Western luxuries and education. Paralleling Ty-

Casper's interpretations, racial lines also divided the *Katipunan*, indicated by Bonifacio and Aguinaldo. Unlike Ty-Casper, however, who is quick to villainize Aguinaldo, Yuson recognizes Aguinaldo's success which demonstrates his leadership capabilities. While Bonifacio's bolo brandishing insurgents failed to secure victory, Aguinaldo's *Caviteños* experienced continual success throughout the province of Cavite. Over time, Aguinaldo and the province of Cavite became representative of the *machismo* power and victory of the Philippine Revolution, so much so that the *Caviteños* believed that they were the sole stewards of the revolution. However, Bonifacio still maintained the position of *Supremo*. Significant tension within the *Katipunan* grew as leaders like León were forced to follow either the official leadership of the Philippine Revolution under Bonifacio or the symbolic leadership of the Philippine Revolution under Aguinaldo. León recognized Aguinaldo as the future of the revolution, as do many other revolutionary leaders. As a result, those choices directly affected the revolution, which eventually led to the execution of Bonifacio as detailed by Ty-Casper. Nevertheless, the revolution continued and for his loyalty, León was awarded a corps of soldiers.

Throughout the Philippine Revolution, León secured victories using the power of the charm in tandem with other items such as a magic handkerchief given to him by Buhawi and vests inscribed with charms that protected his soldiers from bullets, akin to Isio the Pope's charms. At the height of his power, León returned to the island of Cebu to lead the revolutionary forces there. When word reached Cebu that the Spanish massacred the Visayan soldiers, León sought revenge against the colonial Spanish which led to the rampage throughout the streets of Cebu. Only the fort of San Pedro stood as an obstacle to the liberation of Cebu. Utilizing the power of his charm once more, León danced around the fort dodging bullets and humiliating the Spanish. This exemplified how the banana's charm precipitated León's military successes. Like

Isio, León's magic ability was stunted only by modernity as symbolized by warship off the coast of Cebu which began firing into Cebu. The attack forced León's army to retreat to Carcar, where León met his destiny. Stabbed by an assassin, León's charm fell through the wound, and he died.

The Visayas moved on from gods and popes rumored to cure illnesses, create talismans, and bring the dead back to life. Both narratives express how the religiosity and mysticism that were used to oppress the *Indios* could be used to empower them. These various religious groups stood firmly against the Spanish systems. As demonstrated by Dios Buhawi, León Kilat, and Isio the Pope, these organizations were rural, unlike Spanish society which centralized on coastal cities. While Christianity served as the foundation for these groups, the revolutionary leaders went beyond the skepticism of the Catholic Church by enveloping local mysticism and magic into their resistance. Thus the native *Indios* weaponized their religiosity to fight the Spanish. Only through the onset of modernity did these entrenched religious groups begin to dissipate and disperse. Regardless, the act of directly defying the Spanish through local means left a lasting legacy on the Philippine Revolution.

The greatest strength of the *Great Philippine Jungle Energy Café* and *My Sad Republic* is how these two narratives argue that the revolutionary period connects Filipinos throughout time. Yuson specifically emphasizes these connections by creating a deuteragonist that is León Kilat's kindred spirit whom he could communicate with and act through. While León fought against the Spanish in the 1890s, Robert Aguinaldo struggled against the Marcos regime during the 1980s. Throughout the *Great Philippine Jungle Energy Café*, Yuson utilizes both characters to weave together a single narrative about the Philippines. For example, Robert often provided an objective historical viewpoint on key events within León's lifetime. In one very rare instance, León moved through Robert and stormed Malacañang Palace, utilizing the power of the charm as

Robert. Both characters eventually met at the Great Philippine Jungle Energy Café, which is itself a representation of these connections between the various revolutionaries throughout time. Yuson describes a lively scene where numerous historical characters like José Rizal, Tandang Sora, and Emilio Aguinaldo mingled with F. Sionil Jose, Isagani Cruz, and Nick Joaquin. León met with old friends like Dios Buhawi and Robert Aguinaldo. All the energy of the Philippines lived in this space symbolizing the collective identity of the nationalist movement that transcended the revolutionary movement into the modern-day Philippines. Gamalinda shares these sentiments, specifically noting the power of literature in the nationalist movement.

[Isio] saw faces the world had not yet seen and love not yet accomplished I, and finally relieved to find mirror yielding all its truths, he saw one last figure looking back at him, at the history he was about to close—he looked and he saw you, and in the darkness that was fast enclosing him he was filled with joy, because life is endless, its mysteries will never entirely be revealed, and in the beginning and end is the word⁸

Within his conclusions, Gamalinda harkens to the literary foundations of the Philippine Revolution and argues that by engaging in historical literature scholars connect themselves with the revolutionary spirit that dominated leaders like Isio the Pope. Yuson and Gamalinda's allude to the continuing struggle of the Philippines to find meaningful solutions to the three divisions outlined by Rizal. Among these four authors — Rizal, Ty-Casper, Yuson, and Gamalinda — the Philippines are depicted as in a continuous struggle, and each argues that the divisions within the Philippines are mirrored throughout Revolutionary period throughout Luzon and the Visayas.

Francisco Sionil José continues the literary tradition through his authorship of *The Rosales Saga* consisting of the novels *Dusk*; *Tree*; *My Brother, My Executioner*; *The Pretenders*; and *Mass* which directly connects the Philippine Revolution to the Marcos Era. And, though not officially part of *The Rosales Saga*, José's *Viajero* serves as a conclusion of José's narrative by expressing his concerns over the People's Power Revolution and the Corazon Aquino

administration. In totality, these six novels discuss the near century of American influence in the Philippines from the late 19th century to the late 20th century. People from various families and backgrounds served as the narrators of *The Rosales Saga*, however, the focal point of the series is the Samson family who lived in Cabugawan, a barrio of Rosales, Pangasinan. Over four generations, the Samsons were victims of the elite *Mestizo* class of the landholding elite based in local villages and the urban elite based in Manila. Through the Samsons' struggles, José argues that the fundamental conflict within the Philippines is based in the racial divisions established by the Spanish. Within the *Rosales Saga*, Jose calls for a cultural revolution as the requirement to create meaningful change that will free the Filipinos from their subservient condition and allow them to redefine the Filipino identity in the modern era.

José symbolizes the natural state of the Philippines through Mayang, who lived in a small hut in the mountains with Apo Tale and Salvador, her father and adoptive son. While many other representations of the Philippines focused on virginal purity and Catholic chastity, like María Clara and Juli de Dios, José focuses instead on Mayang's interactions with nature, indicative of the relationship between man and nature in the pre-colonial Philippines. When Salvador and Mayang journeyed into the forests, her presence brought the animals at ease, even wandering so close that Mayang could caress them. Salvador recognized a true connection between man and the natural landscape in a cooperative and mutually beneficial relationship, which evolved into religious reverence of nature. For example, many of the locals made a pilgrimage to a small cave with a bubbling spring, placed a candle on a nearby stone, and prayed to the life-giving water. José illustrates the natural state of the Philippines as one where man revered its resource-rich landscape, steeped in beauty. However, bandits disturbed this serene image of the Philippines

when they ransacked Mayang's hut, killing Apo Tale and Mayang — symbolic of the onslaught of Western influences first introduced by the Spanish conquistadors.

Following Spanish rule, the people of the Philippines were subjected to the rigid social classes as detailed by all the previously discussed authors. José discusses these foundations within *Dusk*, as the main character Eustaquio “Istak” Samson searched for his identity in the ever-changing landscape of the late 19th Century Spanish-American War and the subsequent Philippine Revolution. Eustaquio's primary sense of identity was his Ilocano heritage.

Originating in northwestern Luzon, the Ilocanos were simple agrarian people like many of the *Indio* tribes. Eustaquio, as the eldest son, was expected to become the head of the household and continue the family tradition of working the land. As such the family invested in his future by sending him to the local church where the Spanish Father, Padre Jose, adopted him. Displaying potential in academics, Eustaquio studied under Padre Jose and the Catholic Church where he earned a Western education. In doing so the young Ilocano displayed continuing growth, learning about the Catholic God, Spanish, Latin, and the knowledge needed to heal the sick. Due to Eustaquio's growth and scholarships, Padre Jose recommended him to study in the city of Vigan, in the Northern Ilocos region. Sadly, Padre Jose died and was replaced by a younger priest who expelled Eustaquio from the church after Eustaquio witnessed the priest having sex with a young woman. José expresses through this the corruption of the Church that Rizal illustrated in *Noli Me Tángere* and *El Filibusterismo*. However, these interactions also demonstrated the fragile nature of the relationships between the *Indios* and the Spanish which were subject to change within single, individual transactions. This echoed the tenuous relationships between the *Mestizos* and the Spanish illustrated by Ty-Casper. For many like Eustaquio who depended on these personal relationships with the Spanish to forward himself and

provide for his family, these fragile relationships with the Church and Spanish stunted *Indios* ability to succeed within the Spanish Colonial system. As a result of his expulsion, Eustaquio's family migrated south from Ilocos to Pangasinan. Even still Eustaquio's Catholic education proved invaluable as it enabled him to gain reputation and respect, and he used these skills to the civil benefit of his people. The family's survival hinged on Eustaquio's education during their migration from Ilocos to Pangasinan as they encountered many of the other Luzon tribes like the Igorots, Bagos, Tagalog, and Pangasinan who were hostile, distrustful, or violent towards Ilocanos like Eustaquio's family. In contrast, his interactions with his native people provided a sense of comfort and ease as Eustaquio spoke in his native Ilocano and shared in their connected history. José demonstrates how the term *Indio* simplifies the complex ethnic situation of the Philippines, with numerous groups fighting for the finite resources of the island. Eustaquio, for example, expressed many of the traits of the Ilocano people indicated throughout *Dusk*. The Ilocano people were described as survivors, always able to find food within any environment; thusly the Ilocano survived through their adaptability. Similarly, empowered by his education, Eustaquio adapted to the socio-political landscape around him. Throughout both the Spanish Colonial Philippines and the Revolutionary Philippines, Eustaquio established himself within the sociopolitical landscape and adapted to the fluid power dynamics of the late 19th century Philippines.

There were attempts to secure and create a single national identity as demonstrated by Emilio Jacinto and Apolinario Mabini, two historical figures who hid within Rosales in the latter half of the Philippine Revolution. Initially, Eustaquio, having no conception of the Philippines as a nation or the Filipinos as a people, did not understand the cause that Jacinto and Apolinario fought for. Apolinario urged Eustaquio to consider what the future of the islands could be.

If there is no country as such or as you know and recognize, then in your mind you must give it its boundaries. Do this because without this country you are nothing. This land where you stand, from which you draw sustenance is the mother you deny. It's to her where your thoughts will go even if you refuse to think so, for it is here where you were born, where your loved ones live, and where in all probability you will all die. We will love her, protect her, all of us - Bisaya, Tagalog, Ilokano, so many islands, so many tribes - because if we act as one, we will be strong and so will she be. Alone, you will fall prey to ever marauder that passes by. I am not asking that you love Filipinas. I am asking that you do what is right, what is duty [...]⁹

Through this José illustrates his thesis that the failure of the nationalist movement is the lack of a single national identity. This was further evidenced when Apolinario tasked Eustaquio to deliver a letter to President Aguinaldo, who was fleeing from the American forces. To accomplish this goal Eustaquio trekked through the jungles of Luzon, and throughout this journey, he recognized that the American forces in pursuit of Aguinaldo deftly navigated the treacherous jungles.

Eustaquio reasoned that their other *Indios* guided the Americans through Luzon, despite the fact that Americans pillaged the rural countryside. However, these continued the existing tribal conflicts, where American military forces weaponized to fight against competing tribes. José asserts that these disparate tribes possess no notion of the Philippines as a nation — only as a collection of islands and fragmented locally based societies. What bound Eustaquio and many of the revolutionaries may not have been a sense of identity, but rather a sense of duty. Continually throughout the novel, no matter what he identified as, Eustaquio followed his sense of duty—whether that meant serving the Catholic Church, assuming the patriarchal position of the Samsons, or serving as a Filipino in the National movement. Because of his sense of duty, Eustaquio joined Gregorio del Pilar and his Tagalog soldiers at the Battle of Tirad Pass and gave his life to the Filipino cause. It was duty that anchored Eustaquio throughout his entire life and it was duty that Eustaquio held to with his last breaths. As the title suggests, *Dusk* symbolizes the end of the early colonial era of the disconnected and tribal Philippines and the beginning of a

national identity of the Filipino people. However, these issues of identity transformed themselves into the sociopolitical divide between *Mestizos* and *Indios*.

Indicative of this divide continuing within the Philippines is the narrative of Nena, who sired two sons: Luis, conceived after *haciendero* Don Vicente Asperri raped her, and Victor, her legitimate child conceived with her rural husband. José establishes Nena as a parallel to the Philippines, a young virgin woman raped by a Spaniard. If Nena symbolized the Philippines, then her two sons symbolize the two divergent Filipino identities. While both Luis and Victor grew in the poverty of Sipnget, their young adulthood diverged when Don Vincente adopted Luis who became part of the landed *Mestizo* elite. Victor remained in Sipnget and maintained his rural agrarian identity. After Luis was adopted, Don Vicente sowed the seeds of his legacy by emphasizing the need for Western education and preparing Luis for the management of the *hacienda*. As Ty-Casper and Gamalinda argue, the foundation of power for the elite is a monopoly on education. The Samsons continual pursuit of education as a method of escaping their inherent poverty also highlighted the importance of Western education for the rural masses. However, the elite restricted access to proper schooling, believing that educating the masses could lead to armed rebellion and revolt.

Such a rebellion ignited twice within the *Rosales Saga*. First, in *Tree*, when the overseer Espiridion educated one of his most trusted servants Baldo. Originally Baldo utilized his education for the benefit of his benefactors, Espiridion and Don Vicente. However, Baldo realized that the landed elites took advantage of the poor's ignorance and encroached on the property of the rural poor by utilizing the Torrens Title claims which divided the property between the rural farmers and the elites. Because the *Indio* farmers could not read, they could not contest the landed elites' claims. Akin to Cablesang Tales in *El Filibusterismo*, Baldo gathered

support from the local farmers in an attempt at a class action lawsuit to re-establish the proper claims. Despite Baldo's best efforts to force Don Vicente and Espiridion to relinquish the land, Baldo could not surmount the corruption of the courts even with strong evidence on his side he and lost his case. When he returned to Rosales, the mass of poor tenant farmers who invested in him, now disillusioned and angry, wanted an answer for his failure. Baldo responds —

Tell me, you who are older than I, upon whose brows wisdom sits. I've tried but we cannot fight money with money, nor force with force because we haven't enough of these. Where have I failed? Have I not been true to all of you? Tell me my fathers who are old and wise, tell me what to do. I have no money to pay you back. Even the house where I live is not mine. But my blood—take it. Tell me my elders, if it's enough. [...] What has happened to the world? [...] Since when could justice be bought, and men have become strangers to honor? And we who have been marked for this kind of life, shall we be slaves forever?¹⁰

Baldo's story revealed the foundation of the landed elite — education, influence, and money. Even with access to education, considered the foundation of social mobility, Baldo failed to improve his socioeconomic situation and the other *Indios* in his community. The lack of resources surmounted to a lack of agency and self-determination on the part of the poor masses. Recognizing this, Baldo took the only agency he had left by hanging himself as his final statement to elite dominance.

Second, in *My Brother, My Executioner* Victor organized armed resistance to the *hacenderos* like Crisóstomo, Elías, and Cablesang Tales in *Noli Me Tángere* and *El Filibusterismo*. Lacking in all other resources, the poor rely on force, in the form of violent action rather than relying on the subjectivity of racially biased law codes. Vitally, Victor utilized the informal education provided by his brother Luis to organize the various laborers. Victor retreated to the mountains reviving the *Hukbalahap*, originally a guerrilla group that fought against the Imperial Japanese army, now galvanized to dislodge the established *Mestizo* elite.

Like Luis and Victor, many rural Filipinos fought relatives as they joined both the *Hukbalahap* and the Filipino military. The captain of the unit stationed in Rosales discussed this with Luis.

Of course those boys down there, with their families—they are not professionals. They joined the Army because it was just another job. God knows how difficult it is to get a job. Not one among them wants to go to the hills to fight—and yes, some of them have relatives, too, on the other side. No, sir, it has not been easy and it never will be. There is really no sense in going after your own kin, but we must keep our house in order.¹¹

Victor's uprising led to continuous conflict throughout the countryside and the death of his brother Luis and their mother Nena's descent into madness. José utilizes the conflict between Luis and Victor to symbolize the Philippines loss of identity and the descent of the national Filipino cause in the post-World War II Philippines.

It is important to note that while the rich are more socially mobile, they are still entrapped by their own identity as well. Within *Tree* during the early American period the overseer Espiridion died, leaving Nieto¹² as the overseer. After years of abuse from his demanding father, Nieto sought direction in his new role and found guidance from Espiridion's mistress. Through this conversation, Nieto realized that his father never felt fulfilled as the overseer of the *hacienda*. Espiridion blamed himself for Baldo's death, and while he upheld strict expectations for his tenants and his son, Espiridion did so begrudgingly, operating under the belief that authoritarianism was the only way he could maintain his status and protect his son. Nieto came to a similar conclusion as he assumed the position of overseer. While Nieto desired to be an empathetic overseer who genuinely cared for his tenants, Nieto realized that he had no agency and must accept his role as a strict overseer in order to maintain his societal status and elite lifestyle. Luis experienced a similar narrative when he assumed the role of *haciendero* after the death of Don Vicente. Utilizing his position of landed *Mestizo* privilege, Luis desired to liberate his tenant farmers; however, he employed a slow process that would allow him to maintain his

elite lifestyle. In Luis's case and generally of the *Mestizo hacenderos*, their continuing access to more resources ensnared them to their socioeconomic status and also mandated their lack of agency to uplift their society. Ultimately, this societal distance led to clashes between the landholding *Mestizo* elite and their *Indio* dependents and the remaining rural poor as indicated by Baldo's and Victor's rebellious uprisings.

A notable member of Victor's rebellion was Pedro¹³ Samson who participated in the uprising in Rosales and killed Don Luis Asperri. Like many other rebels, Pedro was arrested for life, leaving his children without paternal guidance. For all the Samsons, the father was either absent or died early within the narrative. Eustaquio lost his father halfway through *Dusk*. Tony's father, Pedro, was imprisoned before the beginning of *Pretenders* and died midway through the novel. And, Pepe's father, the aforementioned Tony, committed suicide before the beginning of *Mass*. In José's cruelest example Salvador lost three father figures throughout *Viajero*. The Samson's family dynamic was opposed to Nieto Jacinto and Luis Asperri, representative of elite *Mestizo* culture, whom both grew in the shadow of their important and powerful fathers. Thus their fathers provided their sons' physical comfort and a Western education which fostered their elite status. This enabled them to maintain their sources of power and influence. The lack of the father in the Samson narratives indicated the lack of guidance for rural Filipinos.

Critically, the Samsons lack resources that mired their desires for social mobility. Besides Eustaquio, who was provided an education by the Spanish Church, the other Samsons struggled for their education. Often times, the mother sacrificed her life and welfare for the sake of her sons. The most notable example of this was Emy Samson, Tony's lover and Pepe's mother. Along with her sister Benitta, Emy raised Pepe while also saving money to send him to a prestigious Manila college. In order to do so, Emy and Benitta sacrificed their own wellbeing

and comfort eventually leading to Emy's premature death. Throughout his time in Manila, Pepe found others like his mother who struggled to sustain themselves; specifically, he found others in Manila who utilized the intimate act of sex to sustain their families. First Pepe's first love, Lucy was a beautiful and bright young woman. However, Lucy's family deemed her sister had the highest potential and sent her to college. In order to help afford her sister's education, Lucy found employment as a maid for Pepe's Uncle Bert and Aunt Betty. Despite her best efforts, she could not provide for her sister's education. This changed when Uncle Bert offered Lucy money in exchange for sex. Lucy accepted, finding no other way to provide for her sister's education. The second example, Lily, lived in the same barrio as Pepe. Originally she worked as a clerk for the Chinese merchant in Manila but could not support her ailing parents and siblings. In order to earn more money, Lily became a masseuse at the Colonial, eventually servicing and pleasuring men. While Lily initially hesitated to have sex with her clients, she eventually became adept at pleasing her clients and provided for her family. Even Pepe sold himself to Kuya Nick, a rich but criminal man. Besides selling drugs, Pepe also assumed the role of a *toro* and had sex with Nick's mistress so that other men can watch. While Pepe felt proud of his performance at first, he realized the carnal and animal nature within him — a desire to survive no matter the cost to himself or his honor. Within all these narratives the rural and urban poor sacrificed themselves either physically or emotionally in order to support their families and achieve their personal goals.

If this examination of the familial circumstances symbolized the continuing Filipino plight then both the rich elite and poor rural farmers experienced a loss of guidance exhibited by the death of the father in each noted narrative. It is noteworthy, however, that despite Nieto and Luis also losing their father later in their narratives, they came to accept their positions in life,

guided by tradition and historical precedence. Through their fathers, who provided their sons the tools necessary to maintain the status quo and defend their socioeconomic status, they were able to maintain their birthright linked to their control over the land and the dependent peasant farmers. On the other hand, Tony and Pepe attempted to improve their socioeconomic status, by divorcing themselves from their agrarian and rural traditions, which no precedence existed. Within the context of the *Rosales Saga*, land control was the ultimate traditional source of power, which led to a continuation of authority and control which was challenged in the rise of urbanism in the 20th century.

Tony realized the ambitions of the poor masses, by becoming upwardly mobile and entering the ranks of the Manila-based *Mestizo* elite. He accomplished this by obtaining both a Western education and social connections. First, he earned a prestigious education at Manila University as an undergraduate and then traveled to the United States to attend Harvard as a graduate student. Second, while at Harvard Tony fell in love with Carmen Villa, a young *Mestiza* heiress, whom he later married. Thus, Tony assumed the identity of the newly emerging urban Filipino elite and becomes part of the Villa corporate conglomerate. The *hacienda* system, detailed by Gamalinda and José, articulated how the exploitation of the masses led to the increased power of the rural elite. The urban elite utilized a similar system at a grander scale. In *The Pretenders*, Don Manuel Villa developed a steel mill in Mindanao at the expense of the local populations, assisted by foreign capitalists elite like the Japanese, Americans, and Chinese. Cooperation among the elites maintained their dominant position in society as they operated as gatekeepers to their elite ranks. Worse however was the subversion of the Filipino Nationalist Movement by the local elite for their own profit, as pretenders to the Filipino cause. The worst among the pretenders in José's narrative was Senator Reyes, a representative Filipino politician

who served as the legal counsel for the elite and drafted legislative bills that support their entrepreneurial endeavors. By complying the urban elites gave financial support to his political campaigns. Tony realized

that the interests of each were enmeshed in those of the others. The distinction between government, business, and politics was demolished. [...] The brilliant senator and nationalist was their legal counsel. Tony tried to justify himself; the capitalists were creating many new jobs. [...] And there was no one in Congress, of course, more vociferous in this nationalist protestations than Senator Reyes. 'I'm doing this for my country and people' was his favorite battle cry.¹⁴

Despite outwardly expressing his commitment to the nationalist cause, Senator Reyes perpetuated the suffering of the rural poor for the benefit of his elite networked cronies. Tony justified the corruption, accepted his new elite identity, and forsook his rural roots.

Despite his physical luxury, Tony was not satisfied with his situation. José illustrates Tony's dissatisfaction through his search for meaning in both the future and the past. As previously mentioned Tony had an illegitimate son with his cousin Emy. When Tony met his son Pepe, Tony was paralyzed with fear and could not speak to him. Emy interjected, lying to their child and identified Tony as an uncle. Carmen's unwillingness to have a child which led to an abortion further compounded Tony's frustrations. Thus, Tony could not produce an heir and failed to establish a linked legacy. He also failed to find meaning in the past. As part of his scholarly pursuits, Tony tracked down records of the Samson family patriarch, the aforementioned Eustaquio. While he found Eustaquio's writings, Tony became frustrated at being unable to decipher "alien" the language and to understand his ancestral past. Tony found no meaning in the past or in the future. Like many Filipinos in a transitional sense of identity, Tony could not reconcile his elite identity with his rural societal foundations and became a pretender unto himself. Because of his internal conflict, Tony lost his sense of identity and

committed suicide. José asserts through *The Pretenders* that transitional Filipinos were similarly unable to find a sense of identity, and thus could find no meaning within themselves.

José concludes *The Rosales Saga* with *Mass*, which centers the narrative on Tony's illegitimate son, Pepe, who rejected Tony's narrative of assuming the identity of an elite. Instead, Pepe celebrated his poor, rural identity and rejected education as the only method of social mobility. While Pepe attended college, he squandered the college money he was given. Even though he had the money to attend the prestigious Manila University, he preferred to attend Rector College, a diploma mill for poor urban Filipinos. At Rector College, Pepe discovered the Brotherhood, an anti-Marcos organization at a point of crisis, which mirrored the issues of the earlier *Katipunan* discussed by Ty-Casper. Many in the Brotherhood believed that the best way to empower the *Indio* masses would be to educate them, permitting them to be the equals of the *Mestizo* elite. However, Pepe disagreed with these methods as instructed by the former *Hukbalahap* insurgent, Ka Lucio. Due to Ka Lucio's assertion, Pepe changed his perception of freedom from the freedom of speech, assembly, and elections instead believing that freedom resided within the heart, and not within the mind.

He placed his right hand over his breast. 'It is here, Pepe,' he said. 'This is where [freedom] lives. And once it is dead here, no slogan, no demonstration, no ideology, no devotion can ever bring it back to life. And to people it is not free speech. It is clothing, food, shelter, medicine for the children when they are ill. Education [...] just the simple kind that will enable them to get jobs.'¹⁵

Pepe recognized that while the poor required education, the responsibility of the Brotherhood should be to provide for their physical needs. Due to their poverty, the masses were unable to organize and unable to create meaningful change. The economic status of the poor ensnared them into their subservient position.

Compounding the plight of the masses were pretenders like Juan Puneta, who asserted that the elite would maintain their status due to their adaptability. Unlike the poor who merely satiated present desires, the rich invested in the future and evolve.

[W]e are going to be here for a long time. As a matter of fact, for always. We know how to change, and that is why we will always be on top. But the changes come from us, dictated by us. And as for [Marcos], his interests are with us; he is one of us! Not with the masses—ha, the masses! That's wonderful for speeches. They could not care less for the class struggle, for ideology. Do you know, Pepito, that all they want is a roof over their heads? And three bowls of rice a day? [...] It is really that simple. Their perception of the world, of society, is dictated by their needs.¹⁶

Pepe, realizing the futility of political action like the Brotherhood, refused the political demonstration of Rizal's revolutionary legacy. Rather he accepted the violent resistance of Andrés Bonifacio. While originally a participant of Rizal's *La Liga Filipina*, Bonifacio realized the futility of demonstrating for equality in the Spanish Colonial government. Instead, Bonifacio formed the *Katipunan*, which became the First Philippine Republic under Emilio Aguinaldo. Pepe faced a similar realization in rejecting the political change of the Brotherhood. Following the precedent set by Bonifacio, Pepe took to violence, shooting Juan Puneta, stealing guns and money, retreating to the mountains, and becoming an insurgent guerrilla. Instead of utilizing Western education, a tool of the rich, Pepe committed to violent revolution and educating the rural poor through practical instruction.

José in *Mass* specifically addresses the primary issue of revolution in the Philippines. The cult of Rizal, which developed as a result of his novels *Noli Me Tángere* and *El Filibusterismo*, while recognizing societal ills, perpetuated the belief that governmental structures were flexible and could be manipulated by the masses if they were properly educated. To some degree, José himself is a successor to Rizal by discussing the societal ills perpetuated by the established Filipino and foreign elite. However, José diverges from Rizal and argues that in order to create a

national sense of Filipino identity, the masses must be able to look beyond the regionalism and localisms established in their villages, rather than relying on Western education. Instead, the poor must accept their class identity and utilize it in a class conscious conflict against the established local and urban elites. Throughout *The Rosales Saga*, José envisions a new revolution that would be based on the work of Apolinario and Bonifacio defined by a need to forge a common Filipino identity that crosses social classes and is willing to commit to violence.

In *Viajero*, José refines his message when twenty years later, Salvador dela Raza met Pepe during the height of the People's Power Revolution. Salvador became part of the masses, demonstrating on the EDSA. As Ferdinand Marcos left the country and Corazon Aquino was inaugurated, Salvador joined the masses singing "Bayan Ko"¹⁷ as tears welled in his eyes. Salvador witnessed the empowerment of the masses as a form of political change. But Pepe remained cynical about the actual effects of the People's Power Revolution.

At least, [...] if this succeeds, that's one Filipino tyrant that will be removed. But when will Filipinos realize that it is themselves who are often their worst enemy. My people [...] they are vindictive, they do not know how to save, to produce, to innovate. They are petty, and they pride themselves in baubles which they love to show off. We are a nation of show-offs, and Imelda has captured all that is in the Filipino character— [...] [T]he revolution which people like myself seek, is not here, and we delude ourselves but we cannot stop because we have to hope.¹⁸

While Pepe recognized the People's Power Revolution success in overthrowing Ferdinand Marcos, the power structure of the Philippines did not change. Despite Corazon Aquino's promises of land reform and liberalization of democracy, she still supported political elites and disenfranchised the rural poor. As an example, Salvador participated in a farmers march on Malacañang Palace and armed forces stood before the bridge and shot into the crowd, killing many of the demonstrators. The massacre gave Pepe's argument credence and convinced Salvador that the country could no longer be steeped in its vain materialism but rather be

concerned with its inclusive national identity. José thus illustrates the corrupt elite cronyism in his accounts. In his view the masses, appeased by materialistic comfortability were derailed from nationalistic tendencies by the political elite. Elite had subverted the movement's soul and denied cultural revolution. Tony Samson addressed this concept in his doctoral dissertation —

But to admit into the leadership of the revolution the old elite, no matter how well-intentioned they may be, would be to condemn the revolution to suspicion and betrayal. A class war is precisely that—a class war. The revolution failed because it did not adhere to this basic requirement; a class is weakened not by the identified enemy but by the unidentified subverter who dilutes and weakens its leadership.¹⁹

Pepe and Salvador took this ideology to its practical conclusion. If the revolution must reject the leadership of the old elite, then the revolution must also reject the elite's sources of power; notably rejecting Western education and American materialism. The masses, by divorcing themselves from the power centers of the elite such as land control and new corporate ownership, could address their own needs and develop their own identity. Pepe accomplished this by liberating the tenant farmers from the *hacenderos* and educating the farmers in the methods of management and resistance. Salvador joined the revolution and returned to his childhood home where he taught local youth farming techniques and guerrilla warfare tactics. Thus the new revolution, symbolized by Pepe and Salvador's leadership, ideally utilized the power center of the poor to create change, in the hopes of inciting cultural revolution.

Throughout these Filipino historical novels, the various authors examine the Philippine Revolution in its entirety. Definitively, all these novels originate from the diagnosis set by Dr. José Rizal in *Noli Me Tángere* and *El Filibusterismo* which detailed the three major divisions within Filipino society. Despite the work of Filipino nationalists like José Rizal and Apolinario Mabini to create and forge the Filipino identity, the continued internal struggle within the revolutionary movement and amongst the various ethnic groups of the Philippines led to the

downfall of the movement. As demonstrated by the numerous authors like Linda Ty-Casper, Eric Gamalinda, Alfred Yuson, and Francisco Sionil José, the early Philippines is a topic of great interest and debate. The importance of historical literature in understanding Philippine history cannot be understated as it allowed these authors to focus on the primary divisions which impacted the Philippine Revolution and continue to impact the Philippines today — those of religion, location, and national identity. As José Rizal began the revolution within historical fiction, the work of the modern Filipino writers is to keep the flame of the revolution alive as the Philippines continues to struggle. Even today the continued work of Artikulo Uno Production in producing films which discuss historical figures such as General Antonio Luna, General Gregorio del Pilar, and President Manuel Quezon reflect the power that historical fiction has in enabling the public to consider the themes of their historical narrative and how those conflicts parallel modern-day struggles. To reach higher truths about history and our modern world, one must come to understand the real and the imaginary.

Endnotes

1. *Heneral Luna* (San Juan, Metro Manila: Artikulo Uno Productions, 2015.) *Heneral Luna* is a historical drama based on *A Question of Heroes* by the Filipino historian Nick Joaquín.
2. José Rizal. *Noli Me Tángere* (New York: Penguin Group, 2006), 26.
3. Ibid., 421.
4. José Rizal. *El Filibusterismo*. (New York: Penguin Group, 2011), 235.
5. Ibid., 325.
6. Alfred A. Yuson. *Great Philippine Energy Jungle Café*. (Mandaluyong City: Anvil Publishing, 2015), loc 367-373.
7. Eric Gamalinda. *My Sad Republic*. (Quezon City: Philippine Centennial Commission and the University of the Philippine Press, 2000), 340.
8. Ibid., 390.
9. F. Sionil José. *Dusk* (Manila: Random House, 1992), 292.
10. F. Sionil José, *Don Vicente: two novels* (Manila: Random House, 1999), 86.
11. Ibid., 399.
12. Ibid. The main character of *Tree* is unnamed, however, for ease of discussion, he is given the name Nieto, meaning grandson.
13. F. Sionil José, *The Samsons* (Manila: Random House, 2000), 24-25. Tony's father is not actually named within *The Pretenders*, however in *Dusk* Eustaquio names his two sons Pedro and Antonio. For ease of discussion Tony's father is named Pedro.
14. Ibid., 122.
15. Ibid., 381.
16. Ibid., 513.

17. “Bayan Ko” became popular during the People’s Power Revolution and became the song of the Aquinos and the Liberal Party. Without fully discussing the lyrics, the song expresses the yearning of the Philippines to be freed from its cage so that it can fly.
18. F. Sionil José, *Viajero: A Filipino Novel* (Manila: Solidaridad Publishing House, 1993), 221.
19. F. Sionil José, *The Samsons* (Manila: Random House, 1999), 530.

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